

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 /018 W

----- 034055

R 140933Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 792

INFO SINGAPORE 5776

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP

SUBJ: COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM (CCP) : RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
FY 1976 CCP

REF: STATE 032932

FOR USRTC

SUMMARY: EMBASSY REGRETS DELAY IN SUBMITTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY 7
6

CCP. BECAUSE OF UNCERTAINTIES IN THAILAND, RELATING BOTH TO ADEQUACY
OF E/C OFFICER STAFFING AND POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT, AS WI
LL

BE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL BELOW, POST IS UNABLE TO ESTIMATE AT THIS
TIME WHEN MEANINGFUL CCP RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE SUBMITTED. END SUMMAR
Y.

1. THAILAND'S CCP FOR FY AND BEYOND MUST DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON (A)
PERSONNEL RESOURCES WITH WHICH TO CARRY ON PROGRAM, AND (B) POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT WITHIN WHICH PROGRAM IS TO BE CONDUCTED.
THESE TWO FACTORS WERE PROMINENTLY INCLUDED IN INTRODUCTION AND
THROUGHOUT TEXT OF FY 75 CCP WHICH NECESSARILY CONTAINED NUMEROUS
QUALIFYING STATEMENTS, SUCH AS "AS TIME AND RESOURCES PERMIT", "WILL
DEVOTE AS MUCH TIME AND EFFORT AS POSSIBLE", ETC. AS ANTICIPATED IN
FY 75 CCP, AS REPORTED IN BANGKOK 1364 SEVERAL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES
WHICH EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED HAVE NOT BEEN POSSIBLE
DURING FIRST HALF OF FY 75 LARGELY BECAUSE OF SHORTAGE OF COMMERCIAL
OFFICER PERSONNEL. POSSIBILITIES FOR FY 76 AND BEYOND REMAIN JUST
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AS UNCLEAR.

2. AS WAG AWARE, THE TWO PRINCIPAL TRADE PROMOTION EVENTS CONTEMPLATE
D
IN THAILAND FOR FY 76 HAVE LONG BEEN "IN-STORE PROMOTION" AT BANGKOK'
S
NEW CENTRAL DEPARTMENT STORE, TENTATIVELY SLATED FOR OCTOBER 1975,
AND 25-BOOTH USRTC OFF-SITE EXHIBITION ON HEALTH CARE EQUIPMENT,
PLANNED FOR NOVEMBER. BOTH OF THESE EVENTS MUST BE CONSIDERED IN CON-
TEXT OF TWO FACTORS LISTED IN PRECEDING PARAGRAPH, NAMELY AVAILABILIT
Y
OF PERSONNEL RESOURCES AND POLITICAL/ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT. IN THIS
REGARD, DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION IS INVITED TO FOLLOWING ANTICIPATIVE
SENTENCE INCLUDED ON PAGE 2 OF FY 75 CCP: "IN THE CASE OF TWO EVENTS
(IN-STORE PROMOTION AND 25-BOOTH EXHIBITION) TENTATIVELY PROJECTED FO
R
FY 76, A YEAR BY WHICH GREATER COMMERCIAL EXPOSURE WOULD HOPEFULLY BE
MOST DESIRABLE, THE POST FEELS IT MIGHT WELL BE UNABLE TO MOUT THEM
EFFECTIVELY WITHOUT A RESTORATION OF OFFICER STRENGTH".

3. WITH RESPECT TO PERSONNEL RESOURCES, AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, EMBASSY
SUBMITTED SEVERAL TELEGRAMS DURING SUMMER 1974 URGENTLY REQUESTING
AND PROVIDING WHAT WE CONSIDERED PERSUASIVE RATIONALE FOR RESTORATION
FORMER COMMERCIAL OFFICER STRENGTH. LAST MESSAGE POST HAS RECEIVED
FROM DEPARTMENT IN THIS REGARD WAS STATE 159444, JULY 24, 1974, WHICH
STATED THAT APPROPRIATE STAFFING CHANGES WERE STILL PENDING. UNTIL
ACTION IS TAKEN ON BANGKOK 1879, FEB. 3, 1975, REQUESTING ASSIGNMENT
OF
JUNIOR COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO POSITION 20-5410-306, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY
THAT POST CAN REALISTICALLY ANTICIPATE HAVING NECESSARY THREE COMMERC
IAL
OFFICERS ON BOARD WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL MONTH. SITUATION FURTHER AGGRA-
VATED BY INTENDED DEPARTURE FROM POST IN EARLY JUNE OF FSR GERARDOT,
ONE OF REMAINING TWO COMMERCIAL OFFICERS AT POST (BANGKOK 1880).
STATE 032719 INDICATES THAT EARLIEST ETA OF REPLACEMENT (FOR GERARDOT
)
WOULD BE AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER 1975. THIS IN EFFECT WOULD LEAVE COM-
MERCIAL ATTACHE AS ONLY COMMERCIAL OFFICER DURING CRUCIAL MONTHS
PRECEDING TWO ABOVE LISTED EVENTS, AND HE IS INCREASINGLY OCCUPIED
WITH GROWING NUMBERS OF BUSINESS VISITORS AND MATTERS AFFECTING LOCAL
AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AS STATED IN BANGKOK 1364. WITH THREE
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FULL-TIME OFFICERS JUDGED TO BE A MINIMUM STAFF TO PERMIT MOUNTING
THESE PROJECTS, UNLESS EMBASSY CAN BE INFORMED THAT APPROPRIATE AND
ADEQUATE FULL-TIME ASSISTANCE WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE, EITHER FROM
USRTC SINGAPORE OR COMMERCE, EMBASSY IS FRANKLY UNABLE TO MAKE PLANS
AS REQUIRED BY CCP.

4. WITH RESPECT TO HEALTH EQUIPMENT EXHIBITION, AS STATED IN BANGKOK
0684, IT WAS ANTICIPATED THAT, PENDING FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT

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IN THAILAND, DECISION ON HOLDING COMPLEMENTARY HOSPITAL DIRECTORS AND MEDICAL ASSN. CONFERENCES WOULD NOT BE MADE UNTIL APPROXIMATELY APRIL 1975. GOVERNMENT HAS STILL NOT BEEN FORMED, AND THUS TIMING ON CONFERENCE DECISION (WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECTS SCHEDULED PLANNING FOR EXHIBITION) IS STILL INDEFINITE. IN THIS REGARD, EMBASSY HAS SEEN NO WASHINGTON COMMENT ON FINAL PARAGRAPH SINGAPORE 0366 IN WHICH USRTC STATED DEPUTY EXHIBITIONS MANAGER FROM OIM SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE UNINTERRUPTED ADDITIONAL ON-SITE ASSISTANCE FOR NORMAL PERIOD. REALISTICALLY, UNDER FORSEEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES, SUCH ASSISTANCE MIGHT HAVE TO REVERT TO TAKING ON MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR MOUNTING SHOW, WITH APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE FROM POST'S FSL STAFF. EMBASSY WILL DISCUSS THIS AND RELATED MATTERS WITH USRTC DIRECTOR DURING HIS PLANNED VISIT TO BANGKOK TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 23, AND WILL SUBMIT FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.

5. WITH RESPECT TO IN-STORE PROMOTION, EMBASSY OFFICER MET AGAIN WITH REPRESENTATIVE CENTRAL DEPT. STORE FEB. 13 AND WAS INFORMED THAT DUE TO UNCERTAIN POLITICAL SCENE, NO RPT NO FOREIGN PRODUCT PROMOTIONS HAVE YET BEEN SCHEDULED BY STORE FOR CY 1975. (IN ADDITION TO U.S. PROMOTION, STORE HAS ALSO BEEN CONTEMPLATING ITALIAN WEEK PROMOTION.) CENTRAL REP SAID STORE IS IN PRINCIPLE STILL STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF HOLDING U.S. IN-STORE PROMOTION DURING OCTOBER 1975, BUT THAT DECISION CANNOT BE MADE UNTIL NEXT MONTH AT EARLIEST. TIMING OF DECISION MIGHT WELL PERMIT INSUFFICIENT LEAD TIME TO MOUNT EFFECTIVE PROMOTION, EVEN ASSUMING THAT ADEQUATE PERSONNEL RESOURCES WERE AVAILABLE TO DO SO.

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6. ONE WAY OUT OF DILEMMA POSED BY FACTORS DESCRIBED ABOVE WOULD OF COURSE BE TO THROW UP HANDS AND RECOMMEND CANCELLING THESE EVENTS. EMBASSY WOULD BE EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO TAKE SUCH DRASTIC ACTION, HOWEVER, SINCE, ON STRICTLY COMMERCIAL AS OPPOSED TO POLITICAL AND STAFFING GROUNDS, TIMING IS EXTREMELY PROPITIOUS FOR HOLDING PROMOTIONS

ON BOTH CONSUMER GOODS AND HEALTH CARE PRODUCTS DURING FALL OF 1975. MOREOVER, WITH SO-CALLED "LOW POSTURE" PROFILE ADVOCATED IN FY 75 CCP

, THERE HAVE BEEN NO MAJOR U.S. TRADE PROMOTION EVENTS HELD IN BANGKOK SINCE SUCCESSFUL TECHSPO EXHIBITION OF NOVEMBER 1973, AND WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT DEVELOPMENT OF EXCELLENT LONG-RUN MARKET POTENTIAL IN THAILAND REQUIRES AT LEAST ONE OTHER SUCH MAJOR EVENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

AFTER PERMANENT GOVERNMENT IS FORMED.

7. EMBASSY COULD OF COURSE HAVE SUBMITTED DRAFT CCP FOR FY 1976 BASED ON EXPECTED NORMAL, ON-GOING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY CAMPAIGNS, SUCH AS TOP

PROGRAM, COMMERCIAL NEWS-LETTER, LOCALLY-MOUNTED SINGLE-COMPANY EXHIBITS HELD IN COMMERCIAL LIBRARY, USE OF NEWLY-ACQUIRED VIDEOCASSETTE

EQUIPMENT, MARKET RESEARCH, AND THE LIKE, BUT THESE WOULD BE CONDUCTED

WHETHER OR NOT A CCP WAS IN EXISTENCE,

8. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT EA/EP DEPUTY DIRECTOR IMUS WILL BRING WITH

HIM UNOFFICIAL ADVANCE COPY OF WAG'S PROPOSED FY CCP DRAFT (STATE 033244). AFTER HAVING EXAMINED THAT IN LIGHT OF CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED

ABOVE, EMBASSY WILL PERHAPS BE ABLE PROVIDE BETTER INDICATION OF WHEN FIRM RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE MADE BY POST.

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